

## [Mrs. John Dean]

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Songs

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November 27, 1936 1704 Words

Lamb County

District 17

Life and Cowboy Songs

of J. L. P. Hamilton.

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Bibliography

Mrs. John Dean, Sudan, Tex.

One of the most outstanding cowboy characters in West Texas today is James Lee Preston Hamilton, better known as "Molly" Hamilton. He has lived on the Plains since 1915. Molly's home was originally in San Antonio. He wouldnt would not tell any / more than that except that he left there when he was "just a kitten."

Early in life he wanted to see the West, so he drifted out toward New Mexico in 1902 and landed in the town of Eddy, which is now the town of Carlsbad Carlsbad , N. M. He drifted from place to place, and was in Hope N. M. for a time. While there he went by the 100 name of Badger. Finally in 1915 he came to Lubbock. Two suitcases contained his worldly

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goods.. He was dressed in a nice looking suit of clothes and was immediately taken for a prospector and the land agents started after him. He was offered the land where Texas Tech college now stands and although the agent begged him to take the land, he told them he didnt [didn't?] want it in the first place and in the second place he didnt have any money to buy it.

Starting toward Shallowater on foot, he was picked up by a ranchman who [?] hauling a new piano for the Shallowater school. Molly helped him to unload the piano, then sat down and played some songs for them [?] . Later he went with the ranchman to spend the night. He told his host that he would have to get started early in the [?] morning to catch the train into Littlefield. The nearest place was the Round-Up shipping pens and before he reached there the next morning, the train went past. There was nothing to do but start his long hike again. A farmer passed him going into Lubbock to trade and promised to pick him up on [?] the return trip. When he finally came back, Molly had walked across the Spade, [?] c. 12 - 2/11/41 [?] 2 [?]

and was nearing Littlefield.

The farmer asked a number of questions and so did Molly. Molly asked about the size of the town and the schools and churches. Nothing was said, but because of these questions the idea was given that he was a preacher going to fill his appointment. You see he was still dressed in his good clothes and had his two suitcases. He spent that night which was Saturday in the wagon yard in Littlefield. There seemed to be quite a celebration going on among the cowboys. They were all cooking and having a big time. Sunday [100?] morning the farmer who had given him the ride into town, came down and asked where the preacher was. The friends of the night before were somewhat surprised and said they didnt did not know he was a preacher. When Molly was asked if he was going to preach that day, he said he hadnt had not been asked to do so. Fortunately, he said the regular preacher showed up and saved him the trouble.

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He stayed on in Littlefield and after a few days a foreman came in from Nine Mile Camp, looking for hands to help flank Kaffircorn Kafircorn . He [?] was offering two dollars a day as wages . Molly signed up to go with him, but on further inquiry, the foreman found that he had enough hands but had no cook. The new friends at the wagon yard told of Moll's Molly's cooking ability so his wages were raised to two dollars and fifty cents and he went out as the cook. The cowboys had nicknamed him "Preacher."

By this time his clothing, had become soiled and so he bundled it them up and sent it them to Littlefield by [?] to the barber shop with word to send it his cloths off and have it all cleaned. When the barber who was also the laundry agent asked for the name, the cowboy said, "Oh I don't know. we just call him cookie." So the laundry went in with the name, 'Molly the cook,' The name has stayed with him all these years.

From that time he drifted from one outfit to another working sometimes [69?] as a foreman, sometimes as a common hand or cook. At the time of 3 the big freeze in January, 1918, he was foreman on the Doorkeys. That year they moved the sheep camp and delivered cattle to the Bar N. At this time it was clear that either Molly or the boss' son would have to join the army. They talked it over and decided it had better be Molly. He started gaily into town killing prairie dogs all the way and calling them Dutchmen. On November 14th he drove into Sudan still shooting as he came up to the general store. Mrs. Pete Boesen asked him if he was rejoicing because the war was over. He replied, "Hell no, I came in to join up and cook for them." Having given up his foreman's job, he went back to the 77 as a hand. The 77 outfit belonged to Wilson, Furneaux and Perry Barnes had been the boss.

In 1920 the Sunday School had the first Christmas tree and Molly acted as Santa Claus. After he had distributed the gifts to all the children he told them his reindeer were outside and he had to leave early to get across the sandhills to Muleshoe. When he was asked for a donation for the [100?] new hymn books, he told them to go ahead and order. When they came in he went down and gave a check for them. It amounted to six or seven dollars. After 1921 he came to church regularly in order to get a free meal. Along with Simon D.

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Hay, he was invited one day to J. M. Carruth's for dinner. The next day in telling about the good meal and the good time they had, Simon [?] said to Mrs. L. E. Slate," You know old Molly and I went out to J. M's yesterday for dinner and Old J. M. [100?] called on Molly to pray." Mrs. Slate said, "Well , what did he do ? Simon." "By golly, he just cut loose and [?] prayed, " said Mr. Hay.

The rhythm of the horses hoof has been the inspiration for many cowboy song. Molly was no exception. As he cantered over the range he composed several songs. With him as with all song writers, he tells of the things that he knows and loves the best. If you can imagine the hoof beates beats of the horse on the sod you will have some idea of the rythm rhythm 94 4 of these cowboy songs. "I worked one year for the 77 I rode good horses and a morris saddle, Now, I'm riding broncs on the circle range, I'm gong to Arizona this coming Spring." "I live in a shanty way out on the plains, They call me old Molly but thats not my name, I round up the cattle whenever we brand, Down on the plains by the city of Sudan." "P. H. Barnes is the 77 boss, He cuts out the strays on his old gray hoss, We work our cattle in shushine sunshine and rain, We are now branding out on the 77 range." 105 "Old Mont Bridges is a lad of sixteen, N w riding broncs on the 77 range, Whenever they pitch he grabs that horn, He's the durndest horn- [?] [catcher?] that ever was born." "J. M. Bridges he's a lady's man, He goes to see the ladies at the city of Sudan, He walks in the lobby, says' How do ye do', The next word you hear him say is, "I want to marry you." "O. B. Kelly he's crooked as a rail, I never seen a maverick that he wouldnt steal, When the days work is over he'll dance you a jig, [150?] He catches those mavericks on a horse he calls "Nig." "P. E. Boeson, he's a land agent man, He lives in the city we call Sudan, He'll be selling land when Gabriel blows his horn, For he's the durndest land booster that ever was born." "I've got a pretty girl I'm going to see, I ride the passenger of the Santa Fe, Its a fast running train and I hope it wont stop, Till it gets to Post City down under the Cap Rock."

In giving the words for this song, he had to stop and sing over a verse or two every little bit in order to remember it all. "Well boys if you will listen a song to you I'll sing, I was

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born in the state of old Texas and old Molly is my name, I still live in Texas out on the wester western plains, I'm one of the old cowboys that rides the Circle-back range," " I own eight good cowhorses and they are crackerjacks, I broke 'em while I's working for the Circlebacks, [175] "Long George he's my circle horse, I can lope [235?] him all day, Little Roan he's my cutting horse, never lets one get away, Ole Coaly he's my saddle horse and he travel mighty smooth, I used Old Tom for a rustling horse while I was working for old Poole." "I have one good night horse and thats my snowball gray, I also have a good roping horse that I call the 'Lone Star Bay', When I saddle up 'Old Dunny' he's always ready to go, I have another good circle horse that I call 'Rambling Joe'." "Well boys we'll have to get busy, We have no time to play, We're going to start the Round-up on the first day of May." "When the Round-up is all over and the shipping is all done, I'm going to Kansas City with the last train load thats run, When I get to Kansas City a drink I will like take , I'll tell 'em I'm Molly from old Texas, that good old Lone Star State, When I take three or four, so lively will I be, I'll roam all over that city, the sights I will see, When I start back to Texas, so sober will I be, I'll come in on old Betsy, the passenger of the Sante Fe. Then I'll saddle up old Coaly and away I will go, To / see my darling Blondie, the woman I love so."